

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LISBON 4971

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJECT: RC MEMBER SOUSA E CASTRO ON PROBLEMS OF TRANSITION TO A
CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT

REF: LISBON A-173, JULY 2, 1976

SUMMARY: REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL SPOKESMAN CPT SOUSA E CASTRO
BELIEVES THAT, DESPITE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN "OPERATIONALS" AND
"POLITICIANS," THE RC IS MORE UNITED THAN EVER. THE INAUGURATION
OF AN ESSENTIALLY CIVILIAN SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT WILL CAUSE
WITHDRAWAL PAINS FOR SOME MILITARY MEN WHO ARE EXCLUDED.
BUT THE ARMED FORCES LEADERSHIP APPEARS TO BE
AWARE OF THE PROBLEM, AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, SEEMS PREPARED
TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. END SUMMARY.

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1. DURING A MEETING WITH EMBOFF JULY 21, RC MEMBER CPT

SOUSA E CASTRO COMMENTED AT LENGTH ON THE PROBLEMS OF THE TRANSITION TO A CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT. HIS OBSERVATIONS ARE SUMMARIZED BELOW.

2. RC MORE COHESIVE THAN EVER: THE DEPARTURE OF PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES AND PRIME MINISTER AZEVEDO HAS ADDED TO THE COUNCIL'S UNITY. WITH THE RECENT ADDITION OF GEN ROCHA VIEIRA, RC COMPOSITION IS MORE OR LESS SET. ONE MORE MEMBER WILL BE ADDED IF THE ARMED FORCES VICE CHIEF OF STAFF SLOT IS FILLED.

3. A NEW VICE CHIEF OF STAFF?: THE SEARCH IS ON TO FIND A NEW ARMED FORCES VICE CHIEF OF STAFF. IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PICK THE RIGHT MAN. A DECISION SHOULD NOT BE MADE ON THE BASIS OF WHICH SERVICE HE IS FROM; IT SHOULD BE MADE SOLELY ON THE BASIS OF COMPETENCE. BG SILVA CARDOSO OF THE AIR FORCE IS A "GOOD MAN," BUT HE HAS HEALTH PROBLEMS. IN THE PAST HE HAS FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH HEAVY WORK DEMANDS AND SUSTAINED PRESSURE. HE WAS REPLACED AS HIGH COMMISSIONER IN ANGOLA LARGELY BECAUSE HE WAS UNABLE TO COPE. IN SHORT, CARDOSO IS PROBABLY NOT UP TO THE JOB.

4. ARMED FORCES RESTRUCTURING: THIS IS A PRIORITY TASK, BUT IT WILL TAKE TIME -- NOT WEEKS OR MONTHS BUT YEARS. A KEY ELEMENT IN RESTRUCTURING WILL BE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN "INTEGRATED" GENERAL STAFF. THE THREE SERVICES NOW FUNCTION TOO MUCH LIKE FIEFDOMS. THE ARMED FORCES HEADQUARTERS CURRENTLY EMPLOYS MORE THAN 1,000 PERSONS, INCLUDING CIVILIANS AND MILITARY. IT IS "UTTERLY FANTASTIC" THAT DESPIE THIS TREMENDOUS BUREAUCRACY, THERE IS STILL NO FUNCTIONING JOINT STAFF.

5. DIVISIONS WITHIN THE RC?: CONTINUING SPECULATION ABOUT DISSENSION WITHIN THE RC IS UNDERSTANDABLE. THE CHARACTERIZATION OF THE RC AS AN UNHAPPY MARRIAGE BETWEEN SO-CALLED "OPERATIONALS" AND "POLITICIANS" IS FAIR. THOSE RC MEMBERS MOST ASSOCIATED WITH TROOP COMMANDS -- EANES, ROCHA VIEIRA, PIRES VELOSO -- AND THE THREE AIR FORCE REPRESENTATIVES -- MORAIS DA SILVA, COSTA NEVES, AND CANTO E CASTRO -- USUALLY AGREED ON CONTROVERSIAL MATTERS. RC MEMBERS WHO HAVE BEEN CONFIDENTIAL

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"OUT FRONT" IN GOVERNMENT POSITIONS -- FOREIGN MINISTER MELO ANTUNES, COOPERATION MINISTER VICTOR CRESPO, AND EDUCATION MINISTER VICTOR ALVES -- LIKEWISE VIEWED THINGS SIMILARLY. IN PART, AT LEAST, THIS REFLECTS THE DIFFERING RESPONSIBILITIES INDIVIDUALS ASSOCIATED WITH EACH GROUP HAVE HAD TO CARRY. THOSE OCCUPYING MILITARY LINE POSITIONS ARE INCLINED TO THINK AND RESPOND AS MILITARY MEN. THOSE IN POLITICAL POSITIONS TEND TO RESPOND LIKE POLITICIANS. ADMITTEDLY, HOWEVER,

THERE IS SOME PRE-SELECTION INVOLVED. MELO ANTUNES, FOR EXAMPLE, HAD ALWAYS SOUGHT A POLITICAL ROLE.

6. THE NEED FOR BALANCE: IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAINTAIN SOME BALANCE AMONG THE SERVICES. THE ARMY IS AWARE OF COMPLAINTS THAT IT DOMINATES KEY POSITIONS AROUND EANES. BUT THIS IS NOT ENTIRELY CORRECT. UNDER CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS, FOR EXAMPLE, EANES WOULD HAVE TWO GENERAL-OFFICER AIDES: GEN MELO EGIDIO AND ADM ALMEIDA D'ECA. THESE ARE KEY POSTS. ADMITTEDLY, THEY WOULD HAVE LESS IMPORTANCE IF AN ARMED

FORCES VICE CHIEF OF STAFF WERE NAMED, AS SEEMS PROBABLE.

7. PUTTING IDLE HANDS TO WORK: THE INAUGURATION OF AN ESSENTIALLY CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT WILL PROBABLY CAUSE WITHDRAWAL PAINS. SOME MILITARY MEN, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO HAVE OCCUPIED "MINISTERIAL LEVEL" CIVILIAN POSITIONS WILL FIND IT DIFFICULT TO RETURN TO THE BARRACKS. POSSIBILITIES BEING CONSIDERED TO EASE THE ADJUSTMENT INCLUDE "TRANSITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS." SUCH AS GENERAL STAFF BILLETS AND DIPLOMATIC OR ATTACHE POSITIONS ABROAD. LONDON, PARIS, AND ROME ARE THE MOST DESIRABLE POSTS. A NUMBER OF ATTACHE POSITIONS HAVE RECENTLY BEEN CREATED WITH THIS IN MIND.

8. RC MUST ALSO ADJUST: COUNCIL MEMBERS MUST ALSO LEARN TO LIVE WITH THEIR LESS INTRUSIVE POLITICAL ROLE. THOSE WITH MILITARY POSTS -- BY DEFINITION, PRIMARILY THE "OPERATIONS" -- ARE ALREADY TAKEN CARE OF. OTHERS, FOR EXAMPLE, MELO ANTUNES AS PRESIDENT OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL COMMISSION, SHOULD ALSO BE FULLY OCCUPIED. RC MEMBERS WITH NEITHER FULL-TIME MILITARY NOR CIVILIAN OCCUPATIONS, HOWEVER, COULD BE AT LOOSE ENDS. AN INTERNAL REORGANIZATION OF THE RC IS CONFIDENTIAL

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BEING CONSIDERED TO PROVIDE A CONSTRUCTIVE OUTLET FOR THESE MEN. UNDEREMPLOYED RC MEMBERS WOULD BE ASSIGNED STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES IN SPECIFIED AREAS: E.G., ECONOMIC POLICY OR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS. THERE IS NO INTENTION TO SET UP THE RC AS A PARALLEL GOVERNMENT, BUT RATHER TO PUT UNDER-UTILIZED TALENT TO WORK WHILE PROVIDING THE PRESIDENT WITH AN EXTENSION OF HIS STAFF. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, FOR EXAMPLE, WOULD CLEARLY BE IN CHARGE OF FOREIGN RELATIONS. THE RC HAD A CONSTITUTIONAL ROLE TO APPROVE TREATIES AND OTHER INTERNAL AGREEMENTS DEALING WITH MILITARY MATTERS -- WHICH WOULD INCLUDE AGREEMENTS RELATING TO THE AZORES AND BEJA FACILITIES. THIS DID NOT IMPLY THAT THE

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RC WOULD PARTICIPATE IN THE NEGOTIATION PROCESS.

9. FUNCTIONING OF THE RC: DESPITE ITS INSTITUTIONAL ROLE, THE RC STILL FUNCTIONS MUCH AS AN AD HOC GROUP. THE RC STAFF SYSTEM REFLECTS THIS. IT HAS BEEN STRUCTURED TO ENSURE THAT NO SINGLE RC MEMBER IS ABLE TO DOMINATE THROUGH CONTROL OF THE BUREAUCRACY. INDIVIDUAL COUNSELORS ARE FREE TO REQUEST THAT ITEMS BE PLACED ON THE AGENDA FOR RC MEETINGS. DETAILED AGENDAS ARE DRAWN UP BY THE SECRETARIAT. IF AN ITEM SUGGESTED BY AN RC MEMBER IS OMITTED, THAT MEMBER IS FREE TO REQUIRE AN EXPLANATION DURING THE MEETING ITSELF.

10. COMMENT: SOUSA E CASTRO'S REMARKS UNDERScore PROBLEMS SOME MILITARY MEN WHO HAVE OCCUPIED SENIOR GOVERNMENT POSITIONS MAY HAVE IN ADJUSTING TO A RETURN TO PURELY MILITARY PURSUITS. RECENT COMMENTS BY LABOR MINISTER CPT THOMAS ROSA AND ACTING
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PRIME MINISTER CDR ALMEIDA E COSTA IN PART AT LEAST REFLECT
A WITHDRAWAL SYNDROME (REFAIR) (REFTELS). THE NEW GOVERNMENT
WILL HAVE ITS HANDS FULL IN TRYING TO GET THE ECONOMY
MOVING AGAIN. IT DOES NOT NEED THE ADDITIONAL WORRY OF HAVING
CONSTANTLY TO LOOK OVER ITS SHOULDER TO KEEP AN EYE ON DIS-
GRUNTLED MILITARY MEN WHO THINK THEY HAVE DONE THE
JOB BETTER. SOUSA E CASTRO'S COMMENTS ARE ENCOURAGING IN
THAT THEY INDICATE THAT ARMED FORCES LEADERSHIP IS ALIVE
TO THE PROBLEM. MORE IMPORTANT, THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP SEEMS
PREPARED TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.
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